For Topfree 7, a change in strategy

Aim now is not to be arrested, but to lobby state lawmakers

By DIANNE CARRAWAY
Times-Union

Members of Rochester's Topfree Seven say this summer they'll lobby legislators, rather than a judge, to change a state law that allows men, but not women, to go topless.

Instead of directly challenging the law's constitutionality, they're seeking to lobby state lawmakers for change.

Thus, yesterday's protest at Genesee Valley Park had a different strategy than that of last year.

Last year, the women sought arrest. They notified the media of the location of their protest a few days in advance.

This year, instead of seeking arrest, they wanted as little attention as possible, they said. They alerted the media yesterday by telephone as the picnic began. They did not contact police at all.

"We have not had any negative interaction. There've been joggers and bikers passing by us. It has been no big deal," said Mary Lou Schloss, an organizer of the picnic during which 10 to 12 women went topless.

"This summer we will meet with area legislators and use this kind of argument — that we were here at the park for three hours and didn't draw a crowd," Schloss said.

During last year's Cobbs Hill demonstration, a large crowd gathered and the women, who came to be known as the Topfree Seven, were heckled.

The women were arrested and charged with indecent exposure, gaining media attention nationwide, including inter-

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